



Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District (Article #6)

This pamphlet provides more information regarding Article #6 on the Stratham Town Warrant for consideration at the Town Election on March 8, 2022. Article #6, if passed would enact a Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District for properties with frontages along the Route 33 corridor, from the Town Center to the Greenland town line, in Stratham. This pamphlet provides more information behind some of the goals of the Planning Board in proposing this Article and addresses some frequently answered questions.

Residents can find more information regarding the proposed Heritage District zoning language, by visiting www.strathamnh.gov/route33

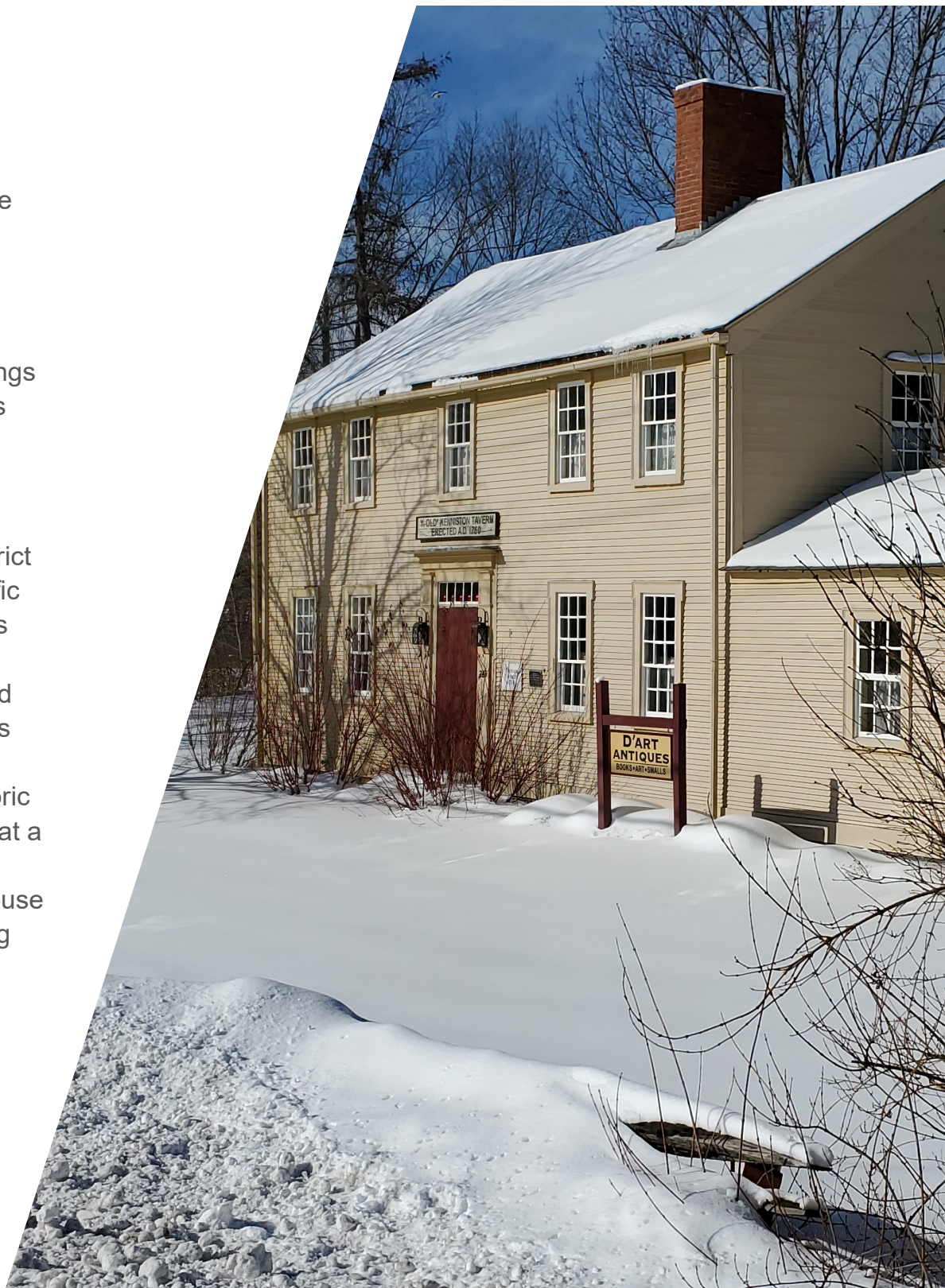
Residents can also contact the Planning Department for more information at planning@strathamnh.gov or by calling (603) 772-7391, x. 147.



PRESERVE HISTORY

Much of Stratham's history unfolded along the King's Great Highway (today's Portsmouth Avenue) and the Route 33 corridor includes nearly three dozen historically significant buildings vital to the early development of Stratham. Unfortunately, some historic buildings have fallen into disrepair. Maintenance needs associated with historic buildings can be burdensome for many property owners.

The Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District recognizes that the corridor, with its high traffic volumes and collection of historic buildings, is unique in Stratham and seeks to provide property owners more tools to rehabilitate and restore historic properties. It also incorporates new design standards for new buildings and safeguards to regulate the demolition of historic buildings. The Planning Board is confident that a Heritage District is the best land use tool available to allow for more flexibility in the re-use and re-purposing of properties while providing for enhanced architectural standards and additional protections associated with the demolitions of historic structures.



MORE OPTIONS FOR LOCALLY GROWN AND PRODUCED FOODS

Stratham is home to a significant number of active farms and agriculture powered the community's early development and is a vital part of both its past and present. The Route 33 corridor itself is home to active farms and the Town would like to help showcase these landmarks and the general importance of agriculture and local produce to the greater community.

The Heritage District would provide opportunities for small shops, cafes, and restaurants to locate in the District and partner with area farms and chefs to provide more locally sourced foods right here in Stratham.



PLACES TO COME TOGETHER

After two years of social distancing, many of us are anxious to reintegrate ourselves into the community and to catch up with our friends and neighbors. But for many of us, that's easier said than done. There aren't always accessible opportunities to meet people, even our own neighbors.

Recognizing that a healthy community is a socially engaged one, part of the intent of the proposed Heritage District is to provide more opportunities for small community-centered businesses and non-profit organizations to locate here in Stratham where residents will enjoy more opportunities to meet and interact with their neighbors. The Heritage District would allow for small cafes, community centers, and performing arts venues by Conditional Use Permit after careful reviews by the District Advisory Committee and Planning Board to ensure such uses would fit the character of the neighborhood, be appropriate for their surroundings, and not disturb residential neighbors.



Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District - Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Route 33 in particular proposed for a Heritage District?

Much of Stratham's history unfolded along the King's Great Highway (today's Portsmouth Avenue) and the Route 33 corridor includes several historically significant buildings the Town would like to help protect. The intent of the Heritage District is to provide more tools to property owners to rehabilitate and restore historic properties through expanded permitted land uses. It also includes additional regulatory tools to discourage demolitions of historic buildings and provide more design standards associated with building projects. The Town recognizes that Route 33 is unique in the community.

Is a Heritage District a Historic District?

No. Although there are some similarities, Heritage Districts are very much distinct from Historic Districts. Unlike the many designated Historic Districts in New Hampshire, a Heritage District is less focused on the individual characteristics of a building or property and more focused on the overall character of the built environment at the neighborhood or corridor level. A Heritage District is generally more flexible and allows for more building activities which do not require review and approval. The approval process for a Heritage District is designed to be more collaborative and less

restrictive than under a Historic District.

Will I have more flexibility regarding the uses of my property?

Generally, yes. The Route 33 Heritage District includes an expanded list of permitted land uses. However, there are restrictions which limit the size and operating hours of commercial uses. The emphasis is on creating opportunities for small-scale, community-centered businesses and organizations to operate. Through its Conditional Use Permit review process, the Planning Board will be able to evaluate proposals to ensure that they are consistent with the character of the corridor and do not disrupt neighboring residents and property owners.

When will the Heritage District go into effect?

If approved by voters, the Route 33 Legacy Highway Advisory Committee and applications for approval would be formalized and approved within 120 days of the passage of the Heritage District.

What types of building activities are regulated under the Heritage District designation?

The demolition of buildings that are more than 50 years old and the construction of new buildings and most building additions

would require review and approval. Most changes of exterior building materials require review and approval. Significant site work may, depending on its extent, require review and approval.

What types of building activities are exempt under the Heritage District designation?

The demolition of buildings that are less than 50 years old and the construction of building additions on the rear-side of structures would be exempt from review and approval. All interior renovations to a building would be exempt. Construction of small accessory buildings under 100 square feet, landscaping and most site and utility activities associated with residential or agricultural uses would also be exempt. There would be no changes to the permitting process for these activities.

Who can I contact for more information regarding the proposed Heritage District?

Residents are encouraged to contact the Stratham Planning Department with any questions. The Town Planner, Mark Connors, can be reached at (603) 772-7391, extension 147 or via e-mail at planning@strathamnh.gov. Residents may also drop by the Town Hall during operating hours.